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SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [AGAO](#) [EPET](#) [EWWT](#) [PINS](#) [TD](#)
SUBJECT: GAO VISITS TRINIDAD TO STUDY MARITIME ENERGY
TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE (GAO JOB CODE 440406)

REF: STATE 89839

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Officials from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), Homeland Security and Justice Team, visited Trinidad June 19-23 to observe the security of energy transport infrastructure into the United States. Through meetings with ministry officials, including the T&T Coast Guard as maritime security designating authority, and visits to a liquefied natural gas export facility and an industrial port, Trinidad and Tobago showed commitment to ensuring maritime security standards to the best of its ability. Each interlocutor indicated the need for more support, either from the GOTT or in terms of resources. GAO officials expressed satisfaction with the visit, as it will likely be the team's only exposure to the export step of U.S.-bound energy transport systems. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Steven Calvo, Assistant Director, and Jonathan Bachman, Senior Analyst, in the Homeland Security and Justice Team at the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), visited Trinidad June 19-23 for meetings with senior GOTT officials, briefings with USG agencies, and visits to port and oil export facilities on the island. The focus of the GAO mission was to fulfill a Congressional request to evaluate the security of energy transport infrastructure into the United States. Having already visited stateside energy (oil, liquefied natural gas, etc.) importation facilities and consulted with international shipping and insurance organizations, the Trinidad visit represented the remaining step in the energy transport lifecycle -- the export stage. In this environment, the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, part of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Seas (SOLAS) within the International Maritime Organization, governs security requirements. For countries that are party to SOLAS, the ISPS Code is a self-certifying regulatory protocol that sets security measures for ships and port facilities.

IN COMPLIANCE WITH ISPS?

¶3. (U) In a visit to Atlantic LNG, whose exports provide up to 70 percent of the U.S. consumption of liquefied natural gas (LNG), GAO officials toured the facility, noting security measures in place throughout the site. In addition to layers of security for entrance to the compound, more stringent security measures surrounded the actual pier and ship-interface position. When queried, Atlantic LNG officials

replied that the July 1, 2004, ISPS Code compliance deadline was the catalyst for many of the present security measures, adding that security had not been such a high priority beforehand. Recognizing the necessity of such security features and the significant export relationship with the U.S. energy market, Atlantic LNG officials seemed committed to maintaining the facility's ISPS compliance.

¶4. (SBU) By contrast, a visit to Point Lisas -- an industrial port with container, energy, and manufacturing import and export piers -- showcased compliance of a different sort. Point Lisas Industrial Development Corporation Ltd (PLIPDECO) officials also stated their commitment to port security and their compliance with the ISPS code. However, a tour of the industrial estate, the largest in Trinidad and Tobago, showed potential laps in security measures. (Note: GAO officials did not have an opportunity to tour the energy-export pier, which appeared to have more enhanced security measures than the other commercial piers on the site.)

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

¶5. (U) Ministry of National Security and Coast Guard officials all emphasized that the government drafted and enacted laws governing maritime security so that Trinidad and Tobago would be in compliance with the ISPS Code prior to July 1, 2004. As the Designating Authority for the ISPS Code, the TT Coast Guard created a Port Security Unit to focus command and control of maritime port security. Both PLIPDECO and

PORT OF SP 00000848 002 OF 002

Atlantic LNG officials spoke of the strong working relationship that each has with the inspectors from the TT Coast Guard's Port Security Unit assigned to the facility. Both commercial entities mentioned positively the TT Coast Guard official's on-site presence several days a week.

¶6. (SBU) All interlocutors indicated that they were always seeking more assistance or more ways to enhance security. Atlantic LNG officials admitted that their facility was most vulnerable on the waterside of the operations and wished for more visible Coast Guard presence. They noted, however, that there were no specific security threats currently and felt confident that the Coast Guard and other authorities would respond immediately if needed. For the Coast Guard's part, it was a quest for more resources, both staff and equipment, to better provide surveillance and patrols and other defense operations. (Note: The Coast Guard is the only water-borne service in the T&T military.)

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: GAO officials found the visit highly informative and took care to thank all interlocutors for sharing their insights and experiences with ISPS Code requirements. Trinidad showed that its commitment to security protocols was as much in action as in word, even while acknowledging the ongoing need for improvement. Business and government officials realize that beyond the necessity of the security measures for continued trade with the United States, there is also the local security benefit and the enhanced marketability of the country's resources and facilities to others. END COMMENT.

¶8. (U) Jonathan Bachman cleared this cable for GAO.

SWEENEY